



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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August 12, 1974

## President Ford Asks For Prayers of the People

74-28

by W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Gerald R. Ford took his oath of office with his hand upon a Bible open at Proverbs 3:5-6. He learned these verses long ago and often says them as a prayer.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

When Ford was confirmed as vice president after the resignation of Spiro T. Agnew, his friends and family described him as a committed Episcopalian who "doesn't wear his Christianity on his coat sleeves." The new president has been a regular church-attending parishoner at Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill in Alexandria, Va.

For many years, while a member of Congress, President Ford met regularly with other congressmen for Wednesday prayer meetings.

One of Ford's sons, Michael, is a graduate of a Southern Baptist school, Wake Forest University at Winston-Salem, N. C. Michael is a student at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Wenham, Mass. He plans a career as a youth minister.

At his inauguration as President, Ford asked for the prayers of the American people. He said, "I am acutely aware that you have not elected me as your President by your ballots. So I ask you to confirm me as your President with your prayers. And I hope that such prayers will also be the first of many."

"As we bind up the wounds of Watergate, more painful and more poisonous than those of foreign wars," the new President appealed, "let us restore the Golden Rule to our political process, and let brotherly love purge our hearts of suspicion and hate."

Less than two months before Vice President Ford was elevated to the presidency, he addressed more than 1,500 Baptists at a breakfast climaxing the Southern Baptist Convention at Dallas, Tex. The breakfast, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, was not an official part of the SBC, which ended the day before.

"America now stands at a very crucial moment of decision," Ford warned the Baptists. "We can surrender to anarchy and agony. Or we can reject negative thinking and get ourselves together and move forward to a higher state of moral responsibility and achievement."

At the Dallas meeting, Ford called on church members to become involved in public service as an expression of their religion. "The church has come to the realization that the job is too big for the clergy to do it all alone. Lay people of all churches must see the broader need to apply their faith where it counts. When the laity moves out of the pews to meet the real problems of our fellow men, then truly will the faith of our fathers become a living faith."

Although the sincerity and integrity of President Ford are universally recognized, not all of his political positions have agreed with views of Baptists and certain other church bodies. As minority leader in the House of Representatives, Ford favored some form of federal aid to parochial schools.

In fact, in January of 1973 he introduced a bill providing a federal income tax credit of up to \$200 per child for parents sending their children to nonprofit nonpublic elementary and secondary schools.

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On other issues Ford disagreed with the U. S. Supreme Court in its position on prayers in public schools and in its decision against capital punishment. On the Supreme Court decision regarding pornography, under which local communities may decide what is or what is not pornography, he has said that the ruling, "If properly enforced, will help to rid us of the plague of smut while not compromising freedom of speech."

Although as a congressman, Ford voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1965, this does not necessarily mean that as President he will follow the same course. President Lyndon Johnson was an example of a person who was reluctant on civil rights while he served as a senator but who became a civil rights champion when he was President.

During the debate in the House of Representatives on the confirmation of Ford as vice president, Rep. Andrew Young (D.-Ga.), one of 15 black representatives, voted for confirmation. "People, given the opportunity to serve in a time of crisis, can meet the challenge," Young said. With regard to Ford's character, he commented, "I sense in him integrity that overrides all political considerations."

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Jay Scott Smith, MK,  
Dies After Accident

8/12/74

SELANGOR, Malaysia (BP)--Jay Scott Smith, 15-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh G. Smith, Southern Baptist missionaries to Malaysia, died here August 10 of injuries received the previous day when the bicycle he was riding was struck by a car. The funeral was Monday, August 12.

He received massive head injuries in the accident and was in a coma when he died.

The Smiths have been stationed in Malaysia since 1973 when they moved from Singapore. He is involved in general evangelism work.

Before their appointment by the Foreign Mission Board in 1963, Smith was pastor of Gill Memorial Baptist Church, Marshall, Mo., for six years.

Born in Bath County, Ky., Smith grew up in Lawrence County, Mo. Mrs. Smith is the former Kathryn Greenfield of Kansas City, Mo.

Survivors include the parents; two sisters, Beth (Mrs. William) Cochran of Missouri and Kendra Smith, currently living in Malaysia; a brother, Dan Smith of Kingsville, Mo.; and a grandmother, Mrs. Bewlah Greenfield of Independence, Mo.

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Baptist World Leaders Send  
Greetings to President Ford

8/12/74

LOUISVILLE (BP)--More than 100 Baptist leaders from 25 countries interrupted the annual meeting of the Baptist World Alliance executive committee Thursday night, Aug. 8, to watch a television broadcast of Richard M. Nixon's resignation as President of the United States.

The international assembly recognized the world-wide significance of the change of U. S. government leadership. When the television report ended, BWA president, V. Carney Hargrove, called on M. L. Wilson of New York to lead a prayer for God's guidance of all world leaders. Wilson, pastor of the Convent Avenue Baptist Church in New York, had been the first black minister invited to speak at the White House worship services during the Nixon administration.

On the following day, as Gerald Ford was about to take the oath of office as Nixon's successor, the group adopted a resolution presented by a special committee chaired by former BWA president, Theodore F. Adams of Richmond, Va.

The resolution stated: "The Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, Aug. 9, 1974, representing 98 member bodies in 75 countries with a constituency of over 60 million people voted to extend to the Honorable Gerald Ford assurance for their prayerful concern and best wishes of this international Baptist fellowship as he

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enters upon new and grave responsibilities as President of the United States. We trust that under his leadership the cause of international peace, justice and good will will be sustained and strengthened for the best good of all the people of the world."

The committee asked general secretary Robert S. Denny to forward a copy of the statement to President Ford.

Meanwhile, in a separate action, the general board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, meeting in Columbia, S. C., sent a wire to President Ford, assuring him of the group's prayer support.

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Emphasis on Evangelism  
Permeates BWA Meeting

8/12/74

By C. E. Bryant

LOUISVILLE (BP)--The executive committee of the Baptist World Alliance admitted three new national bodies to its membership, heard reports of a worldwide increase in Baptists, approved a 1975 budget and gave major attention to plans for the 13th Baptist World Congress, July 8-13, 1975, in Stockholm, Sweden.

The meeting also included proposals for revision of the BWA's constitution, first adopted in 1905.

Some 216 persons from 25 nations participated in the meetings of the BWA's executive committee, five study commissions and a variety of smaller committees on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a school which has been the training ground of four of the 13 presidents in the BWA's 69-year history.

Three new organizations--the Bolivian Baptist Convention, the Baptist Convention of Guiana and the African Baptist Assembly of Bolivia--were voted into the Alliance's membership, bringing the BWA constituency to 98 member bodies in 75 countries. Only national indigenous organizations are eligible.

The Alliance secretariat, headed by general secretary, Robert S. Denny, announced also that Baptist churches in 140 nations and dependencies reported 2.25 per cent increase in membership to 33,492,813 baptized believers as of January, 1974. Statistician Carl W. Tiller of the BWA staff projected this membership figure to mean a total international Baptist "community" of 63,561,445. This larger figure includes persons reached by the work of the churches but not included in the baptized membership.

Major proposals of the BWA's committee on structural changes, chaired by David S. Russell of England, would seek to establish regional "areas" within the world structure, designed to take the BWA to the people in their home areas and facilitate the cooperation of Baptist people within geographical zones.

A majority vote from the floor suggested addition of "evangelism and education" as a fourth major division within the Alliance structure. Other divisions listed by the committee and actually in effect for many years are communications, relief and development and study and research.

All proposals reported by Russell and tentatively approved by the executive committee will be incorporated in a revised constitution submitted to the 1975 congress in Stockholm for acceptance or rejection.

The regional structure, a BWA spokesman said, represents an extension of the present operation in that regional fellowships have already been pioneered in Europe, North America, Asia and the Carribean.

Gerhard Claas of West Germany reported for the program committee looking toward next July's congress in Stockholm. A format providing emphases on Bible study (by language groups), inspirational messages, discussion forums and international fellowship was approved.

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The congress theme will be "New People For a New World--Through Christ." The theme, based on II Corinthians 5:17 is seen as a climax to the BWA's World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ, which has encouraged member bodies to promote reconciliation (man with God and man with man) in their own ways since the 1970 congress in Tokyo.

Joseph B. Underwood, chairman of the World Mission of Reconciliation steering commission, reported that 98 conventions and unions in 85 countries have participated officially in the World Mission of Reconciliation. Unprecedented gains in evangelism have been noted, including thousands of baptisms in such scattered areas as Nigeria, India and Brazil. Underwood, an executive of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said that more than 20,000 "first time decisions" have been reported in Nigeria, including tribal chiefs and kings.

"Similar responsiveness to the Gospel of Christ in many other countries of Africa," Underwood noted, "has caused students of that continent, who a few years ago predicted that the entire continent would be Muslim by the year 2000, to revise their predictions." Their belief now, he said, "is that if the present trends continue, by the year 2000, Africa, south of the Sahara, will perhaps be the world's most Christian continent."

Treasurer Fred B. Rhodes reported that a short fall of contributions caused the BWA's headquarters office in Washington to operate at a small deficit in 1973, but that good management indicated 1974 accounts will about balance if income continues as expected. A budget of \$228,500 was approved for 1975, a figure Rhodes estimated as much too meager for a world organization.

The committee on relief and development, which operates a relief program apart from the general budget, adopted "goals" totaling \$530,500 to fund relief projects in 1975. Chester J. Jump, relief chairman, pointed out that aid to suffering people is given only as money becomes available.

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Christmas in Summer  
Is Very Logical

8/12/74

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--Santa Claus, twinkling lights and Christmas carols in mid summer may be somewhat unusual, but giving for the increasing needs of foreign missions seems to make it all fit into place nicely.

All 345 summer staff members at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center here recently participated in an offering to raise \$1,180 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions in lieu of exchanging gifts among themselves at Christmas.

At the beginning of the week-long Christmas Celebration at the end of July a goal of \$500 was established with an accompanying goal of 100% participation from the staff. By the time the deadline for giving had passed, both goals were met and the dollar goal was more than doubled.

The Christmas Celebration and the Lottie Moon Offering were part of the conference center's lead program, a project consisting of mission, recreation, worship and celebration for staffers when they are not working. It is planned to a large extent by the staffers themselves to be constructive and entertaining in a Christmas atmosphere.

Snow and cold wind were missing for this Christmas celebration but the spirit of giving was very much present.

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